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General and complete disarmament: towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

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Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

The General Assembly,

Noting its resolutions 53/77 Y of 4 December 1998 and 54/54 G of 1 December 1999,

Expressing its deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used,

Noting the International Court of Justice advisory opinion entitled "Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons", issued at The Hague on 8 July 1996,[1]

Noting also that three States continue to operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and have not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and concerned at the continued retention of the nuclear weapons option by those three States,

Declaring that nuclear test explosions carried out in 1998 by two of the States that have not renounced the nuclear weapons option do not in any way confer a nuclear-weapon State status or any special status whatsoever,

[1] A/51/218, annex.

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Noting that despite achievements in bilateral and unilateral arms reductions, the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and in stockpile still amount to many thousands,

Welcoming the significant progress achieved in nuclear weapons reductions made unilaterally or bilaterally under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) process, as steps towards nuclear disarmament,

Welcoming also the ratification of the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II)[2] by the Russian Federation as an important step in the efforts to reduce strategic offensive weapons, and noting that completion of ratification of START II by the United States of America remains a priority,

Concerned that negotiations on nuclear arms reductions are not actively under way,

Welcoming further the significant unilateral reduction measures taken by other nuclear-weapon States, including the close-down and dismantling of nuclear weapon-related facilities,

Welcoming the efforts of several States to cooperate in making nuclear disarmament measures irreversible, in particular, through initiatives on the verification, management and disposition of fissile material declared excess to military purposes,

Noting the nuclear-weapon States' declaration that none of their nuclear weapons are targeted at any State,

Underlining the necessity of strict compliance by all parties with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,[3]

Noting the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[4] in which the heads of State and Government resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers,

Welcoming the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

Taking into consideration the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States, in the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are committed under article VI of the Treaty,

Underlining the need for action to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons,

Determined to pursue practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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[2] *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, vol. 18: 1993 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.A.1), appendix II.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 729, No. 10485.

[4] Resolution 55/2.

and paragraphs 3 and 4 (c) of the 1995 decision entitled "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament",

1. *Agrees* on the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;[5]

2. *Calls* for the upholding of a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions pending entry into force of that Treaty;

3. *Agrees* on the necessity of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. The Conference on Disarmament is urged to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty with a view to their conclusion within five years;

4. *Agrees* on the necessity of establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament is urged to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate establishment of such a body;

5. *Calls* for the principle of irreversibility to apply to nuclear disarmament, nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures;

6. *Calls* for the early entry into force and full implementation of START II[2] and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, while preserving and strengthening the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems[6] as a cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons, in accordance with its provisions;

7. *Calls* for the completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency;

8. *Calls* for steps by all the nuclear-weapon States leading to nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability, and based on the principle of undiminished security for all, for:

(a) Further efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally;

(b) Increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the nuclear weapons capabilities and the implementation of agreements pursuant to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons[3] and as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament;

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[5] See resolution 50/245.

[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 944, No. 13446.

(c) The further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process;

(d) Concrete agreed measures to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems;

(e) A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination;

(f) The engagement as soon as appropriate of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons;

9. *Calls* for arrangements by all nuclear-weapon States to place, as soon as practicable, fissile material designated by each of them as no longer required for military purposes under the International Atomic Energy Agency or other relevant international verification and arrangements for the disposition of such materials for peaceful purposes, to ensure that such material remains permanently outside military programmes;

10. *Reaffirms* that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective international control;

11. *Calls* for regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, by all States parties on the implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 decision entitled "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", and recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996;[1]

12. *Agrees* to pursue the further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world;

13. *Calls* on all States not yet party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, promptly and without condition, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, and calls upon those States to bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols consistent with the Model Protocol Additional to the Agreement(s) between State(s) and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards[7] for ensuring nuclear non-proliferation, and to reverse clearly and urgently any policies to pursue any nuclear-weapon development or deployment and to refrain from any action which could undermine regional and international peace and security and the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation;

14. *Calls* upon those States that have not yet done so to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to conclude additional protocols to their safeguards agreement on the basis of the

[7] International Atomic Energy Agency, INFCIRC/540 (Corrected).

Model Protocol approved by the Board of Governors of the Agency on 15 May 1997;

15. *Notes* the paramount importance of effective physical protection of all nuclear material, and calls upon all States to maintain the highest possible standards of security and physical protection of nuclear materials;

16. *Notes* that the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons agreed that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and that it called upon its Preparatory Committee to make recommendations to the 2005 Review Conference on this issue;

17. *Reaffirms* the conviction that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament, and supports proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not yet exist, such as in the Middle East and South Asia;

18. *Affirms* that a nuclear-weapon-free world will ultimately require the underpinnings of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments;

19. *Acknowledges* the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/54 G,[8] and requests him, within existing resources, to compile a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

20. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session the item entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda" and to review the implementation of the present resolution.

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[8] A/55/217.